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RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 9606
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 1076
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STATE FOR OES AND EAP/CM
STATE PASS TO OSTP ROLF

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SUBJECT: NOAA DAS DISCUSSES COOPERATION WITH CHINA'S CMA AND SOA

REFTEL: 08 BEIJING 4250

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Deputy Assistant Secretary, Dr. James Turner visited Beijing on August 13 to discuss areas of collaboration with the China Meteorological Administration (CMA) and State Oceanic Administration (SOA). CMA officials expressed appreciation for the long-standing cooperation with NOAA, noting that NOAA has been training most of CMA's senior staff since the late-1980s and many of CMA's key technological advancements are in part due to NOAA's assistance. In his meeting with SOA, Dr. Turner repeatedly raised the issue of real-time data sharing from China's ocean monitoring satellite network, but SOA officials remained tight-lipped on the topic stating that this issue (REFTEL) would be discussed at the upcoming NOAA-SOA data panel meeting in early September in Washington DC. SOA officials also requested increased collaboration with NOAA on "Marine Functional Zoning (MFZ)" noting that coordination among China's different ministries and offices responsible for oceans management has been difficult. SOA's Dr. ZHANG Zhanhai also provided a brief overview of China's Arctic and Antarctic research stations. END SUMMARY.

CMA CREDITS NOAA FOR CHINA'S IMPROVED STORM PREDICTION

12. (SBU) CMA Deputy Administrator Dr. SHEN Xiaonong provided a brief overview of CMA, noting that his organization falls directly under the leadership of China's State Council and is essentially equivalent to a ministry. CMA has 53,000 fixed staff, 40,000 contractors, 2,400 staffed weather monitoring stations, 20,000 unmanned remote monitoring stations, and 120 sounding devices that provide real-time data to CMA's data integration center in Beijing. CMA also operates China's Fengyun (FY) weather satellites.

13. (SBU) Tropical storms Goni and Morakot resulted in eight deaths on the Chinese mainland and expected losses of 9.89 billion RMB, according to the Disaster Relief office of Ministry of Civil Affairs. Dr. Shen said that the death toll due to the storms was relatively low, in part because of advanced warning systems that were the result of NOAA-CMA cooperation. Shen also said that NOAA had helped CMA acquire advanced technologies, including high-powered computers, space-rated semiconductors for weather satellites, and weather radars, resulting in key advancements in CMA's tropical cyclone tracking and prediction capabilities.

14. (SBU) Shen was remarkably candid regarding the stove-piping that continues to hinder Chinese intra-governmental cooperation. He said

that coordination on major issues such as climate change is difficult since CMA "has no authority for anything below the sea surface." Despite the need for improved integrated ocean/atmosphere research, CMA itself sometimes has difficulty in obtaining ocean-related data from SOA.

15. (U) An official from CMA's National Meteorological Center (NMC) also provided Dr. Turner with a briefing on NMC's capabilities. [NOTE: NMC is roughly equivalent to the National Weather Service in the U.S. END NOTE.] The official said that NMC operates a "decision making/policy assistance" office which has been crucial in helping Chinese leaders make informed decisions regarding weather-related disaster mitigation. These recommendations have resulted in far fewer deaths due to weather phenomena and more efficient emergency evacuations. NMC also generates computer models that predict pollutant, toxic chemical, or radiological material dispersal. NMC coordinates these efforts with other Chinese government organizations such as the Ministry of Environmental Protection, which would be responsible for responding to such an incident.

SOA'S ROLE GROWS AS OCEAN ECONOMY EXPANDS RAPIDLY

16. (U) On August 12, DAS Turner visited Qingdao to give a keynote address on the Ocean Economy at a forum sponsored by China's State Oceanic Administration (SOA). The forum was well-attended and included several senior provincial leaders, including the governor of Shandong Province and mayor of Qingdao. DAS Turner also visited Beijing on August 13 to discuss areas of collaboration with Dr. ZHANG Zhanhai, the Director General of the Department of International Cooperation at SOA. Zhang stated that 40% of China's population lives on the coast, 60% of China's GDP comes from coastal

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areas, and another 10% is from the "marine economy" noting that this has doubled in just 5 years from 5% in 2003.

17. (SBU) Zhang said that a SOA delegation will accompany Minister of Science and Technology Wan Gang for the upcoming Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) on Science and Technology in Washington in October, although he did not indicate what specific proposals would be discussed at the JCM. Zhang also noted that he was looking forward to the NOAA-SOA Data Panel meeting in September. DAS Turner used the opportunity to raise the issue of real-time satellite ocean data (and continued to raise it numerous times throughout the meeting) but Zhang was reluctant to discuss the issue, saying that this topic will be discussed at the data panel meeting. [COMMENT: SOA's response was consistent with previous NOAA and NASA efforts to obtain real-time satellite data from SOA. SOA appears committed to not providing the data and it is unlikely that this position will change at the September Data Panel meeting. END COMMENT.]

18. (SBU) Zhang said that he hoped that SOA could work more closely with NOAA on "Marine Functional Zoning (MFZ)." SOA said that coordinating issues such as aquaculture, ocean disaster mitigation, ocean pollution, and marine eco-preservation among different ministries and offices responsible for oceans management has been extremely challenging. SOA was interested in learning more about NOAA's MFZ-equivalent "Ocean Spatial Planning" effort. DAS Turner noted that NOAA had encountered similar difficulties in implementing the ocean spatial planning concept.

19. (SBU) During the SOA-hosted lunch, Zhang spoke at length about SOA's Arctic and Antarctic research facilities, since he had previously worked in the department that operated these sites. He said that SOA operated two Arctic research centers and three Antarctic facilities, with one only become operational within the past two years, situated on the highest part of Antarctica at an altitude of 4300 meters. Zhang said that the Antarctic research facility on Georgia Island would soon be receiving new satellite receiving equipment that would help SOA conduct climate change research [NOTE: SOA operates China's Haiyang ocean monitoring satellites and will probably be able to downlink real-time ocean data and images to their Antarctic station with this equipment. END NOTE.] Zhang also said that the high-altitude Antarctic facility will be receiving astronomical observation equipment since the atmosphere at this location is clear and dry. Zhang did not suggest

conducting joint Arctic/Antarctic research with NOAA but was clearly proud of China's research facilities at these sites.

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